

MINUTES
MARION CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
CONFERENCE CALL / SHANNON WILKERSON GYM
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2020 AT 6:30 P.M.

MAYOR/COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT:

Mayor Ashley Brady

Councilwoman Tassie Lewis

Councilman Ralph Atkinson

Councilman Michael Baker

Councilman Joseph Frazier

Councilman Ronald Atkinson

Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt

STAFF PRESENT:

Alan Ammons, City Administrator

Ainsley Sanders, City Clerk

Patricia Brown, City Treasurer

James Brogdon, City Attorney

Chris Smith, Captain

1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER – MAYOR ASHLEY BRADY

Meeting was called to order by Mayor Ashley Brady.

2. PRAYER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor led pledge and prayer.

3. WELCOME CITIZENS, GUESTS & PRESS – MAYOR ASHLEY BRADY

Mayor Ashley Brady welcomed the all guest.

4. APPROVE MINUTES – REGULAR MEETING AUGUST 11, 2020

A motion was made by Councilman Michael Baker, seconded by Councilman Joseph Frazier. The motion carried.

5. **AUGUST EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH – MAYOR ASHLEY BRADY**

August Employee of the Month is Reverend Kenneth Foxworth from Public Works Department. Mayor appreciated everything he does and handed him a token of appreciation. Reverend Foxworth does all of our maintenance items. Give him a project, he takes care of it. We talked about catfish creek, and how the benches were made up, and he designed them. His helper Mr. William got the benches in, and anything we need him to do we can just call him up and he will take care of it. Always has a smile on his face and happy about it.

6. **BIDS ON HUGGINS ST. PAVING**

Mayor Ashley Brady stated that, included in our packets where the bids we had gone to CTC committee last month and have got about \$85,000.00 for the paving of Huggins St. If you see there is one bid Herrington Construction and that bid is \$89,360.00. We are about \$ 4,000.00 over what we were approved for CTC. Talked to chairman of CTC and said we could go ahead and approve contingent on CTC approving it. They might want us to go back and get, more bids but they might go ahead and approve it. Mayor Brady says that his recommendation is to go ahead and approve it contingent upon CTC approval. ***A motion was made by Councilman Michael Baker, seconded by Councilman Joseph Frazier.*** The motion carried.

7. **DISCUSSION ON CITY FACILITIES RE-OPENING**

Mr. Ammons stated that the list is just a list of a few things. He mentioned that he has had some calls from Council members and residence about

limiting some re-opening. He listed four things to consider as you can see like the gym - one day and one night per week with a limit of 15 people, Grice's Recreation Center – one rental per week with only 50% capacity, Exercise Class – eight people per class, and Opera House – one rental per week with 50% occupancy. So basically we cut all our numbers to use gym and this will be a start and if Council desires we will try this for 30 days. As you can see we require a sign in roster at each facility, temperatures will have to be checked and follow all CTC guidelines, and then will be tracked and see about the virus if it has spikes. It can be traced back and see if we've had some people.

Mayor mentioned by limiting one per week it gives us time to get in and clean those facilities. Brief discussion Councilman Michael Baker stated for Mr. Alan to go to page 2 and 3. Mr. Alan stated back in May when we closed everything this is a breakdown of what we had in Marion County and then as you can see as of the whole state. He stated that today there is 125,000 cases across the state Marion County we have 1 case. Mayor stated the numbers have trended down. We had one case back in May. Mr. Alan stated a lot more testing going on. Hopefully when school starts back I know Marion is doing virtual but they have given us the go ahead to move forward with soccer, football with the Recreation Center. Hopefully basketball for recreation coming up in November. Hopefully this will kind of give us a way to see if we are prepared to move forward. ***A motion was made by Councilman Ralph Atkinson, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt to approve the opening of City buildings with limited use based on what the Administrator Ammons just said noted that we will***

keep sign in roster and check temperatures before entrance and follow all other CDC guidelines. Councilman Michael Baker stated that he wants on record that the numbers back in May was one case in Marion County and to this date it's 749 cases and we closed it back in May based on that, based on what was going on in the County and state and not only that its worst now then it was doing that time. With the motion you said it would be revisited in 30 days he said he was in agreement with that, but before the meeting Councilman Michael Baker stated that he was not in agreement with that at all; re-opening, because if we had cases back then nothing has changed. It has only escalated. We cannot sit here and fool ourselves. Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt stated that he knows how important it is to exercise himself, and exercise is the very thing that keeps you from dying. As we look in society that we are in balance of the people, and in 30 days we will know more about it.

Councilman Baker stated that like he said he was totally against it, but actually looking at it he stated that he will agree on the 30 days, but it has not decreased it has tremendously increased and we all sitting around this table know there is an increase, and we all sitting around this table know people that have died since May of Covid and so I'm not in favor said Councilman Michael Baker but he said he will go along with the 30 day trial and revisit in October, but as far as getting better do not fool yourselves it isn't.

Attorney said just to verify the 30 days. Is this motion Councilman Atkinson will it expire after 30 days or re-opening. Councilman Atkinson said to be on agenda for next month. Attorney stated just to make sure everyone is on

the same page. Councilwoman Lewis mentioned that it's a slow process. We want everyone to maintain safety and there are some guidelines here that everyone is going to follow and hopefully it works out but it's a slow process, and slow process is good.

Mr. Ammons stated that this may be all that we can do until first of the year.

Councilman Atkinson mentioned that his motion didn't mean that we would open everything up. Brief discussion with everyone talking at the same time. The motion carried.

8. REQUEST TO ADDRESS COUNCIL – CANDICE TYLER – MARION FITNESS GROUP (CD JOYNER ROOM)

Mayor addressed Mrs. Candice Tyler and extended for her to address Council. He also stated that we have solved her problem. The group thanked Council.

9. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Sale of old Track hoe

Mr. Ammons stated we got the new track hoe in a couple months ago we had to get a couple things ironed out, but everything's good now. Mr. Ammons stated we talked about before when we got it we would go ahead and sell the old track hoe and would like the Council's desire and if that's what they would like for us to do. Put it on govdeals for bids and maybe sell minimum bid \$15,000.00 and that way we can take that money towards new grapple truck. ***A motion was made by Councilman Michael Baker to go along with recommendation to sell track hoe minimum bid for \$15,000***

list it on govdeals, and proceeds to use for grapple truck. The motion carried.

Miscellaneous

Mr. Ammons stated that he has spoken with Mr. Hucks at USDA. Our grant application was good, and our paperwork is in. We are approved it's just a matter of getting money in from Washington, and then we will bring back to Council. Councilman Ralph Atkinson asked was it a 50%, and MR.

Ammons mentioned that it will be \$50,000 toward a purchase of grapple truck. We have got this money here and lot of some other things we have sold over time. We will bring all of that back to Council and look at it.

Mr. Ammons want to let everyone know what we are doing concerning garbage pickup. He mentioned he know that everyone has been getting calls about the garbage pickup and about dumpsters not being dumped on businesses. Garbage pickup with residential has been somewhat on schedule up until last week. For about a month commercial accounts have been way off schedule and we have been getting a lot of calls. Just want to bring that to Council attention and he's been trying to stay in contact with all of them updated about what's going on. He has had some issues with the virus. The office has been closed for a couple of weeks now. So some of the complaints we have been getting at City Hall is there is nobody to talk to. Mr. Ammons said that he has spoken to them about that and they need to make phone arrangements. The phone needs to go to somebody somewhere, because that upsets people that when they call nobody answers the phone or they can't leave a message and nobody call them back. Did want to bring it to Councils attention because sometimes we are

being accused of not doing anything but we fight this battle every day and he knows the Mayor knows it. Mr. Ammons says that he gets them at night, weekends and that's fine he says he gets paid for that and that's fine. He talks to everyone who calls him, and he told them at City Hall to give out his cell number. He had a lady call 8 o'clock Friday night and her garbage can was turned over and "you don't understand" she told Mr. Ammons. Mr. Ammons replied that he does care and he is on the Friday route as well, and they got her trash that night.

Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt had brief discussion concerning County trash, and asked where they experiencing some kind of complaints or problems as far as not picking up the garbage. Mr. Ammons responded that they are using another vendor. Mayor Pro Tem wanted to know how they are able to keep up with garbage. He said to be in this business they have to have what you call insurance. That insurance is supposed to provide us insurance.

Councilman Ralph Atkinson said that people from out the County dump in City, and he got to work and his dumpster was over flowing with lid thrown off. They come from either City or County and he have caught people out the County dump their trash.

Mayor Pro Tem says that County is not having the same issue. In other words he thinks he's a good business man but somethings going wrong, and if it were an occurrence onetime year. (Councilman stopped there and Councilwoman Tassie Lewis picked up)

Councilwoman Tassie Lewis stated that if people don't have adequate pickup they are going to find a place to put their trash whether it's in my

dumpster or cart. They are going to find a place to put the trash. Nobody wants not to have a place to put their trash.

Mayor Pro Tem says he has a restaurant and chicken and beans and all kind of stuff in the garbage can and the whole neighborhood smelling it ain't good.

Mr. Ammons stated that he just wanted to make council aware and we are doing what we can do daily to try to get this thing going, but it's become a challenge. We have actually picked bags and have out of people garbage out cans so they'd just have a little more room. The dumpster is a real problem because with those not being picked up some people have 2 and 3 pickups a week that they are going to Grand Strand and saying "I was supposed to get picked up this week and was only picked up one time and I ain't going to pay, and Grand Strand says no you have to pay it, because I got contract with the City that says when we took up this water and sewer system it was on bill and if you don't pay it then we going to cut your water off." Then they call City Hall. So Mr. Ammons says he understands the whole things because they not getting services that they are paying for.

Mayor stated that Mr. Alan was being nice but basically what's happening is he's getting phone calls and he is as well. We are getting complaints. They out for covid and Mayor says he understands they are out for covid but there is call forwarding that can be put on cell phone, his cell phone or operations manager. That is an easy fix. He can call AT&T and get it added and he needs to be taking care of that. In the past and the last couple of weeks trash cans full he's going by Tassie's House pulling 4 or 5 bags of trash out the trash can leaving trash. Going to Emerson restaurant and got

2 dumpsters at your restaurant. One is full, one has got a little bit of trash he will dump the full and leave the other. Restaurants can't have those full trash cans it stinks to high heaven. If DHEC comes and does inspection while trash cans over flowing guess who is going to get fined. Pictures were sent around by Mayor says the Mayor last week. We had to shut down recycling center because it wasn't dumped. Mayor Pro Tem asked have AWS contacted him at all. Mayor said no he had to contact him by email and tell him (Pro Tem said so he hasn't contacted you as Chief Executive Officer of the City.) Mayor says he don't contact us he have to contact him. Mayor said when you going to fix this? We got to have it fixed. So Mayor said we can't take any action on it right now but he wants to put it on agenda to discuss next month. Mayor just believe we need to take action because our citizens pay too much money. Mayor stated yes we may get behind on cutting our grass but we have a legit reason. He told us several months ago he'd get new trucks. He's using side loader trucks they are leaving lids open. They are filling full of rain water and our elderly people can't pull them full of rain water. They have got to dump it over and have all that nasty rain water. Our senior citizens don't need to be messing with that stuff. I just think it's time we need to have a heart to heart about what we are going to do about the trash. The complaints go to show that it's terrible.

Councilman Michael Baker stated that in addition can attorney find out what reinforcement we have.

Mayor Pro Tem also stated that could he also offer us a contingency plan in case this body has to take action. If we have to take action, but we may not

have to take action, but we may be forced. That's public health we are talking about. We already dealing with covid-19.

Mayor Ashley Brady added it's the trash, stench, restaurants, commercial accounts, diapers, babies, adults. It's just a terrible situation.

10. CITY ATTORNEY'S LEGAL UPDATE

Attorney do not have anything at this time.

11. DISTRICT AND CITY UPDATE FROM COUNCIL AND MAYOR

Mayor Ashley Brady: Mayor Brady started by saying we are behind in grass cutting and are not making excuse because of the rain. The rain is kicking our behind as fast as we cut it, it grows the next day. Some of the residential properties we normally cut with track hoe they have standing water. It's dried up so we are cutting, and we are trying our best to get caught up on grass cutting. Our grappler truck is down since last Thursday it has ignition control problem. We were supposed to have got parts in day of Council meeting and by day after council meeting it will be on the road. Mayor said that one thing he participated in last week was Congressman Tom Rice had school supply to children. It was well organized drive through. Nobody got out of cars, practiced social distancing. Councilwoman Tassie Lewis, Council Michael Baker, and Mayor Ashley Brady helped and participated in chicken give a way down at Green St. complex. Had a large crowd, and very hot. Tassie was toting boxes. Mayor stated that they all where toting boxes. Alan was there also.

Last month we approved electronic sign which will go on Bobby Gerald Parkway. It's a 2 sided billboard sign. We have put the deposit down so they are in the process of that.

You should have got some emails on a gentleman name Ron Drake. Ron Drake works for HMRA. He is a consultant on Downtown revitalization. He's going to be in town next week. If you haven't got the email or flyer. There are several meetings lined up next week in conjunction with HMRA. Mayor said that it will be handled in executive session but did want to tell you that the shooters at the shell station have all been apprehended.

Councilman Michael Baker: Councilman Michael Baker didn't have nothing at the time.

Councilman Joseph Frazier: Councilman Joseph Frazier asked about the woman that was dead on Withlacoochee. Mayor responded that the individual they found on Withlacoochee he thinks was natural causes. Captain Smith was there but thinks it was a natural cause. Lots of rumors and heard everything probably what Councilman you heard but still thinks it was natural causes.

Councilman Ronald Atkinson: Councilman Ronald Atkinson didn't have anything at the time.

Councilwoman Tassie Lewis: Councilwoman Tassie Lewis didn't have anything at the time.

Councilman Ralph Atkinson: Councilman Ralph Atkinson didn't have anything at the time.

Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt: Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt just wanted to say that was a great response for Mrs. Lewis as well as the district. Good positive response to the event and also cleanup for the area. We do look for that in keeping our areas clean.

12. EXECUTIVE SESSION

- Personnel Matter – Police Department

A motion was made to go into executive session to discuss Personnel Matter-Police department

13. POSSIBLE ACTION ON EXECUTIVE SESSION ITEMS

No action was taken.

14. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilman Michael Baker to adjourn. The motion carried.

Mayor Ashley Brady

Ainsley Sanders, City Clerk
Taped: September 8, 2020